

A SERIOUS ADDRESS
ON 7297
CERTAIN IMPORTANT POINTS,
OF
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE
AND OF
CHRISTIAN DUTY:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON
DELIVERED AT WOOLWICH IN KENT.

BY JAMES UPTON. K

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PUBLISHED AT REQUEST.

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"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

JESUS CHRIST.

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London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY J. BATESON;  
AND SOLD BY  
W. BUTTON, PATER-NOSTER ROW; T. WILLS,  
NO. 2, STATIONERS COURT; AND  
M. GURNEY, HOLBORN.

1797.

[ PRICE THREE PENCE. ]

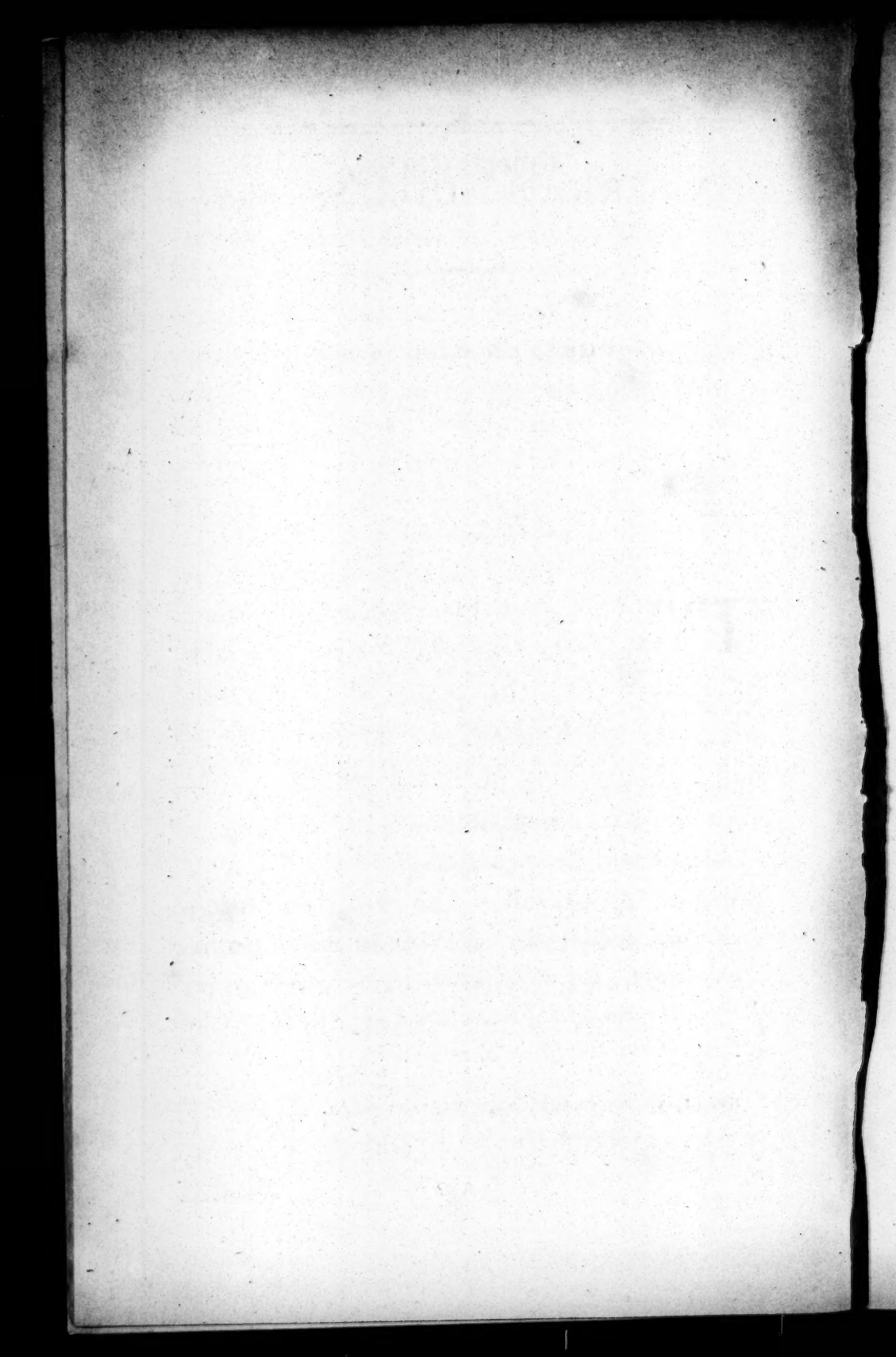


## Advertisement.

*IT is now more than two months since the substance of the following pages was delivered from the pulpit, the Author having been exercised with personal affliction, and a very painful dispensation in his family; the death of one dear daughter, and two other children apparently brought to the gates of death: during which time, he has had peculiar reason to admire the goodness and faithfulness of a covenant God, which he desires to record with gratitude; as also the kind and affectionate attention of many dear Christian friends, during the painful visitation. Being through rich mercy in measure recovered, he has seriously reviewed the subject, and is satisfied that the sentiments advanced are agreeable to the Word of God; and as such he commits them to the divine blessing. There are many faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, from whom he conscientiously differs, for whom he feels the most cordial esteem, and with whom he desires to cultivate real friendship; and he breathes the language of his heart, when he adds---Grace, Mercy, and Peace be multiplied toward all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

NO. II, UNION PLACE, BLACKFRIARS ROAD.

OCTOBER 12, 1797.





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## A SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

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I CORINTHIANS, X. 15.

I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN : JUDGE YE  
WHAT I SAY.

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**T**HE Gospel of our Salvation is very justly styled the gospel of the grace of God ; yea, the grace of God itself, which bringeth salvation : all its glorious and distinguishing doctrines exhibit to our view the exceeding riches of divine grace. — Grace laid the foundation of the spiritual temple ; grace raises the superstructure ; and the top-stone will be brought home with shoutings, crying, Grace ! grace unto it ! — or rather to him who has brought it home.

But if any persons have such views of the doctrines of grace, as cause them to lose

sight of their genuine influence on the hearts of believers, as lessen the importance of christian duty, or supersede warnings against sin, exhortations to watchfulness, and diligence in using the means of grace, or solemn admonitions by the awful example of others, their ideas do not coincide with those of the inspired Apostle:—Read the context.

Having in the preceding chapter spoken of the christian life under the idea of running in a race, or being engaged in a warfare, or severe conflict ; in the beginning of this chapter, he cautions persons against resting in external performances or outward privileges, or being satisfied with the form of godliness, while strangers to its power on their hearts. The Israelites were under the cloud, and passed through the sea ; they ate the manna which came from above, and drank of the water which flowed from the smitten rock ; yet, after all, were overthrown in the wilderness, and many of them perished in their sins. “ Now these things happened unto them for ensamples ;  
and

and they are written for our admonition : wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The dear children of God, though they shall never fall into hell, may fall into error, and sin, so as to dishonour the Lord, wound their own consciences, and grieve their fellow-christians.—Therefore, watch and pray, lest ye be overcome and fall by temptation.

The words of the text, as they will apply to subjects in general, upon which ministers of Jesus Christ may be called to speak, are by no means improper on the present solemn occasion. I shall, therefore, as the Lord may enable me, endeavour to address you in a very serious and affectionate manner.—I speak as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.

Some of you, very probably, possess a considerable degree of natural and acquired wisdom ; consequently are wise men as to the things of the present world : and many of you, having been taught by the Holy Spirit, are, I believe, made wise unto salvation. However, remember you have

nothing but what you have received of the Lord ; therefore do not glory as though you had not received it.

Permit me to make remarks on my text as I proceed.

First, The words imply, that a true minister or servant of Jesus Christ does not desire an implicit regard to be paid to those things which he asserts, but will exhort persons to examine them, in order to judge of their nature and of their importance.— Judge ye what I say ; and, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Secondly, It is of very great importance in religious concerns, for persons to be fully persuaded in their minds by what rule they are to judge, in order to determine what is truth, and what is error.

Shall we appeal to human reason on this occasion?—it is awfully depraved ; blindness prevails in the mind of every man by nature ; and reason, without divine revelation, is by no means our standard. Shall we determine by the writings or opinions of eminently great and gracious men, who  
have



have devoted their time to study and serious inquiry after truth ? I revere the man of sound learning, though I can lay no claim to it myself : I venerate the aged minister of the Blessed Jesus, whose hair is grown grey in the ways of righteousness. If I differ from such in some particulars, I do it conscientiously. But, after all, men have been, in some respects, mistaken ;—men are still fallible creatures, who know but in part : therefore, Call no man master upon earth ; for one is your master, if ye are christians, even Christ. The rule, the only rule, the everlasting rule by which we are to judge and determine, with reference to divine truth, is the sacred word of God.—“ To the law and to the testimony ; if men speak not according to this word, it is because (in that particular) there is no light in them.” Again : “ Search the Scripture !—What saith the Scripture ?—How readeſt thou ?” I do, therefore, seriously exhort you to compare what you may hear at this time with the oracles of God.—Judge ye what I say.



Thirdly, Remark, it is consistent with strict integrity toward God, and faithfulness in the discharge of his duty, for a minister of Jesus Christ to treat his hearers with affection, and even those who may differ from him with respect. Bitter invectives and foul calumny do not, by any means, become the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. "In meekness we are to instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth." The text is the language of kindness—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say." There are ministers of the glorious Gospel, who occasionally labour in this town, from whom I conscientiously differ with reference to Baptism, but for whom I have a sincere personal respect.

I now proceed to address my dear hearers as persons of intelligence, capable of comparing what they hear with the blessed word of God. As the ordinance of Baptism is now to be administered, you will naturally expect to hear something relative to that  
sacred

sacred institution ; but my address shall not be confined to this subject, as I wish to speak to you on things of still greater importance,—things essential to your happiness and mine.

I will speak to you, first, concerning the most miserable condition into which mankind universally are fallen, by original apostacy from God, and by actual violations of his holy law. All are become guilty, are under the curses of a broken covenant, and exposed to the everlasting wrath of Jehovah. “ Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” Rom. iii. 19. “ They are all gone aside ; they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” Psa. xiv. 3. “ Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.” Gal. iii. 10. And “ The wages of sin is death.” Rom. vi. 23.—Judge ye what I say. May the Lord, by the almighty energy of his Holy Spirit, give

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you

you to know and feel these things, that you may cry for mercy !

Again, I will speak to you relative to the way of pardon, peace with God, and eternal happiness. Salvation springs from the free and sovereign favour of Jehovah. —By grace are ye saved. The important blessing was obtained by the obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Son of God, in our nature, who, being made perfect through sufferings, is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. So that there is no pardon for the guilty —no acceptance for the ungodly—no peace for the distressed—no happiness for the miserable, but through faith in the person, obedience, sacrifice, and intercession of the adorable Immanuel.—  
 “ Neither is there salvation in any other ; for, there is no other name, under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts iv. 12. Consider what I say ; and may the Lord give you understanding in these things.

Farther,

Farther, Give me leave to speak to you respecting the nature and necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit upon your hearts ; for Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 3. Remember the speaker in this chapter is the great prophet of the church ; a teacher sent from God ; of whom it was said, “ Never man spake like this man ! ” Oh ! that I could so speak, as to affect your consciences upon this very important subject ! But it may be some of my hearers may say—“ Why  
 “ all this earnestness ? I have been present  
 “ when children have been baptized ;  
 “ I have seen the minister sign them with  
 “ the sign of the Cross ; I have heard him  
 “ afterwards address the people present, in  
 “ the following words : ‘ Seeing now,  
 ‘ dearly beloved brethren, that this child  
 ‘ is regenerate, and grafted into the body  
 ‘ of Christ’s church, let us give thanks to  
 ‘ Almighty God for these benefits.’—  
 “ He has then added, ‘ We give thee  
 ‘ hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that  
 ‘ it hath pleased thee to regenerate this  
 ‘ in-



‘ infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive  
 ‘ him for thine own child by adoption, and  
 ‘ to incorporate him into thy holy church.’  
 “ Yea, more; when I was under the in-  
 “ structions of my parents or schoolmaster,  
 “ I was taught to reply, in answer to the  
 “ second question in the Catechism—Who  
 “ gave you this name? My godfathers  
 “ and godmothers, in my baptism; where-  
 “ in I was made a member of Christ, a  
 “ child of God, and an inheritor of the  
 “ kingdom of heaven! Have I not, there-  
 “ fore, been born again?—am I not a  
 “ christian?”——These are the very things  
 I was taught to repeat when I was a boy;  
 but do they agree with the word of God?  
 —Judge ye.

Suffer me to ask, is there a serious  
 thoughtful person in this congregation,  
 who does not tremble at the thought of  
 such sentiments being instilled into the  
 tender minds of children? Remember,  
 these things are not taught by Protestant  
 Dissenters, but by persons of a different  
 persuasion. Consider, therefore, whoever  
 were

were your parents, or whatever their character, whether pious or profane, that YE must be born again. Take heed of the flattering idea of federal holiness, as though the children of the godly were much better than others. Is it thus?—Answer this, ye mourning though believing parents, who have often wept over your disobedient children, and say where is the evidence of such federal holiness? Are our children better than others? “No, in no wise.” Rom. iii. 9.

Unless the soul be quickened by the Holy Spirit, and made alive to God, persons have no experimental knowledge of divine truth, no true faith in the precious blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, nor any genuine love to God : for, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, &c.” 1 Cor. ii. 14.—Hence arises the absolute necessity of being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Pause, and consider these things.

Once more: I observe, believers are under infinite obligations to our Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, and should be very solicitous to manifest their love to him, and thereby to glorify his blessed name. Obedience is certainly the proper evidence of sincere, unfeigned love: Hence Christ has said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Again, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

There are some serious persons, who, when speaking of the positive commands of Zion's King, express themselves in a very improper manner, particularly when the solemn ordinance of Baptism is the subject of conversation. Some have said, "Baptism is of very little importance;—  
 "a mere non-essential;—yea, but a trifle."  
 To such godly persons, I beg leave to propose a serious question: Is any thing essential to our salvation that is performed by us? For instance; Is it essential to our eternal happiness that we meet at the Lord's Table, to shew forth his death till he come?—I presume, none who fear God will say that it is; yet those who love the  
 Lord

Lord Jesus Christ esteem it a great privilege to meet together, to commemorate the adorable Redeemer's dying love.

I consider that there are but two things absolutely essential to the everlasting felicity of a guilty apostate sinner : First, an interest in the perfect and glorious work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sin must be pardoned, or a sinner can never enjoy true happiness. Now there is no forgiveness exhibited, but with a view to the atonement of Christ ; for " without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. —There is, therefore, no salvation, but through the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. But all those whose iniquities were made to meet upon the great Surety of the new covenant, who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, are virtually saved in him.

Secondly, It is absolutely necessary, for every person who will be saved, to be taught by the Holy Spirit to believe in the Son of God : " For he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God



God abideth on him." John iii. 36.—  
Again, " He that believeth not, shall be  
damned." Mark xvi. 16. O solemn words!

But if any sinner, however vile, has an  
interest in what the blessed Redeemer has  
done for his people; and if this is made  
known to his heart by the Spirit of Truth,  
so that he is brought humbly and entirely  
to depend on the blood and righteousness  
of the divine Mediator; he shall be eter-  
nally saved,—yea, even though it should  
be at the eleventh hour, so that he may  
never have an opportunity of performing  
one act of external obedience to the will  
of God our Saviour. Witness the dying  
thief on Calvary—Behold a man, who had  
lived without God in the world; a trans-  
gressor of the laws of his country suffering  
condign punishment, according to his own  
words—" We receive the due reward of  
our deeds!" Perhaps, when he was first  
nailed to the cross, he despised the only  
Saviour of sinners; we are informed that  
" The THIEVES, also, which were cru-  
cified with him, cast reproach in his teeth."

Matt.

Matt. xxvii. 44. Admire the freeness, riches, and power of invincible grace!—The thief cried for mercy! “ Lord, remember *me*, when thou comest into thy kingdom!” To *him*, the compassionate Saviour replied—“ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise!”—Encouraging example of sovereign grace!

The question, therefore, my dear hearers, is not, *What is essential to salvation?*—but, *What is the will of Jesus Christ, our Law-giver, and our King?* I trust, when the Lord was pleased to open my eyes, I was led to reflect as follows:—Once a rebel against the Majesty of Heaven, under the curses of a broken law, and exposed to the everlasting displeasure of a righteous, sin-avenging God; without either will or power to deliver my own soul; Jesus, as the effect of infinite love, became my surety—died in my stead—shed his precious blood for the remission of my numerous and crimson sins—rose for my justification—lives to intercede for me in heaven—and he has sent forth his good Spirit, to convince

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vince me of sin and to lead me to himself: Oh! matchless grace! I am not my own, I am bought with a price!—"Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?" I heard him say in his word, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Ye are my friends, if ye do *whatsoever* I command you."—and "Why call ye me, Lord! Lord! and do not the things that I say?" Feeling the constraining power of divine love, a believer should say—

Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,

I'll follow where he goes:

"Hinder me not!"—shall be my cry,

Though earth and hell oppose.

With such sentiments and feelings, I was enabled to embrace the ordinance of Believer's Baptism more than nineteen years ago; and I declare before the Lord, that it does appear with increasing evidence to my mind, to be according to the word of God: so that, upon the most serious reflection, notwithstanding all the reproach which

which has been and is cast upon the Baptists, I esteem it an honour and happiness to be a minister of Jesus Christ, of the Particular Baptist denomination.—I speak these things, in the fear of God, as to wise men ; judge ye what I say.

I now proceed to state a few things to you, relative to the solemn ordinance about to be administered in this place this evening. It is not my intention to make positive or dogmatical assertions, much less with improper temper to reflect upon those who conscientiously differ from me. I will endeavour seriously and candidly to state my own views of this subject, and to adduce such evidence as satisfies my own conscience : compare what ye hear with the word of God, and judge ye what I say.

First, I believe Baptism to be an ordinance of God, which ought still to be kept as it was delivered.

Secondly, I believe the proper subjects of this divine ordinance are such as profess repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ ; and no other persons.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I believe that Baptism is never properly administered, but when it is done according to the revealed will of God ; and that it is never administered agreeably to divine appointment, unless the subject is immersed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The first proposition—namely, that Baptism is an ordinance of God, which ought still to be kept as it was delivered—will, I presume, be disputed but by few : it is generally allowed, by persons professing Christianity (except the people called Quakers) that Baptism is what is termed a standing ordinance of the Gospel ;—I conceive our Lord's words confirm this idea—" Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations ; baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ! Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world !" The promise implies, that it would be the duty and practice of the ministers of Jesus Christ,

to

to teach and baptize, even unto the end of the world; and the Apostle praised his brethren at Corinth, for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered to them, 1 Cor. xi. 2. Who can have authority to alter what the Lord has appointed?—None upon earth, or in heaven.

The second proposition follows: I believe the proper subjects of this divine ordinance are such as profess repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and no other persons. This will, probably, be disputed by some now in the presence of the Lord. I offer what I have to speak, with candour, simplicity, and affection;—judge ye what I say.

I advert to the first account of Baptism in the sacred word of God, Matt. iii. 5. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him, IN JORDAN, CONFESSING THEIR SINS!”—From which it is obvious that they were not infants, but persons capable of consideration and reflection, and who professed re-

re-



repentance toward God. John, the Baptist, addressed some who came to his baptism, and who were the seed of the venerable patriarch Abraham, in the following words : “ Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance : and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father ! for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham ! And now, also, the ax is laid unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” I ask, Did not John refuse to baptize, even some of the children of Abraham, because they were destitute of personal religion, and therefore of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ ?—Judge ye !

In the sacred commission given to the apostles of the Son of God, to which I have already referred, observe, instruction was to take the lead ; they were first to teach, and then to baptize those who received their instructions : “ Go ye, therefore, teach

teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" and, because there are many duties incumbent upon the followers of Jesus Christ, it is added—" Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The same order is observed by the Evangelist Mark, chap. xvi. 15, 16. " And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature : He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Observe, preaching and believing precede Baptism.

I pass on to the Acts of the Apostles.— It is to be supposed, that these inspired servants of the exalted Jesus were taught by his Spirit to understand the commission which they had received : how did they act ? After they had been endued with power from on high, Peter preached a solemn sermon ; many of his hearers were pricked in their hearts, and said unto him and to the rest of the Apostles, " Men and

brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said unto them, " Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Observe,—Peter first preached; the power of God attended the word; many who heard were convinced of sin, and inquired concerning salvation: he first inculcated repentance, and then Baptism.

It may be asked, Did they act agreeably to this word of exhortation?—read the 41<sup>st</sup> verse of the above quoted chapter (Acts ii.) " Then they, that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls." First, gladly received the word; then, were baptized; and after this, joined in communion with the Disciples:—the order which we think it our duty to observe. Could they be infants?—Judge ye what I say.

But it may be some of my dear hearers will say, " You have studiously passed over unnoticed a passage which has had  
con-

considerable influence upon our practice, respecting our dear offspring, and which has sometimes been insisted upon by the most wise and learned of our ministers, as directly in favour of our practice; yea, as containing almost demonstration upon the subject; namely, ver. 39, ‘The promise is unto you, and to your children.’—I purpose to take notice of these words: the Lord forbid that I should either trifle with or pervert the sacred Scriptures.

Remember, also, I have the happiness to be a father; and, I trust, feel in my breast parental affection toward my dear children; yea, the tender paternal affection of a christian parent: I desire daily, by prayer, to commit my tender offspring to the blessing of heaven, and earnestly to beg, above all things, that they may be taught to know themselves as sinners, to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ, and then to follow him in his ordinances.—To baptize them without a divine command, would subject me to that penetrating in-



terrogative, " Who hath required this at your hand ?" Isa. i. 12.

Instead of wishing to evade the passage referred to, I rejoice in it ; whether, by " the promise," you understand the promise of the Holy Spirit, the promise of divine forgiveness, or the grand promise of eternal life.

The promise is to you, who are now made sensible of your sinfulness ; and to your children, upon whose heads you have awfully imprecated the blood of Christ, by saying " His blood be on us and on our children : " Matt. xxvii. 25. concerning whom, probably, you now feel the most painful anxiety. And to all that are afar off, even to poor outcast sinners of the Gentiles, the promises are pregnant with blessings—" Even as many as the Lord our God shall call," as I trust he has you, by the ministry of his word, and the almighty energy of his Holy Spirit.

I confess I cannot see any thing in the passage which relates to the baptism of chil-

children : Neither, perhaps, after all, is it quite so plain as some have imagined ; or the late learned Dr. Hammond, who was an advocate for the baptism of infants, would not have said, “ If any have made use of that very inconcludent argument, Acts ii. 39. I have nothing to say in defence of them.”—See his Works, Vol. I. page 490.

I proceed to other instances, in this part of sacred record, of persons being baptized.

Philip, one of the seven deacons, went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them : “ And when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts viii. 12. The persons are expressly said to be men and women, without the least hint in reference to children ; and the characters of these persons, who were baptized, are recorded as being also believers.

In the same chapter, we have a pleasing narrative concerning an Eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians : This man had been up to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel, and, in returning through the desert, employed himself in studying the sacred scriptures : Philip, by direction of the Holy Spirit, met him thus engaged, and from the same scripture preached unto him Jesus : when they came to a certain water, the eunuch inquired—"What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest!" Does not this imply—If you are destitute of faith in the Son of God, you are not a proper subject for Baptism? —Judge ye what I say.

There is one passage more I beg leave to recite, in the 18th chapter of this book, verse 8.—"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house : and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized."

Hence

Hence it appears to me, from the word of God, that those persons who were baptized by the Apostles, and by the first ministers of the Gospel, were persons professing godliness : and the records of history agree with the oracles of heavenly truth. Bishop Taylor says—" The wisest of our  
 " fathers in Christ did not come unto  
 " Baptism, until they were come to a  
 " confirmed wit and age. There is no  
 " pretence of tradition, that the church  
 " in all ages did baptize all the infants of  
 " christian parents : it is more certain that  
 " they did not do it always, than that  
 " they did it in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, and St. Austin, were  
 " born of christian parents, and yet not  
 " baptized, till the full age of a man."

We are told, that " Gregory Nazianzen,  
 " born in the year three hundred and eighteen, whose parents were christians, and  
 " his father a bishop, was not baptized  
 " till about thirty years of age : And  
 " Chrysostom, also born of christian parents, in the year 347, was not baptized



“ tized till near twenty-one years of age.”  
 (See Mr. Booth’s *Pædobaptism Examined*,  
 Vol. II. pp. 117, 118.)

By way of objection to what I have asserted upon this part of the subject in support of the second proposition, it may be said, “ The Apostles baptized whole households, and consequently baptized infants.” The fact that households were baptized, is readily granted ; but that infants composed a part of those families is to me by no means evident. I am willing to examine the word of God, with candour and seriousness.

Several households are mentioned in scripture, which I beg leave to notice.— We read of a certain nobleman, who applied to Christ on behalf of an afflicted son, who appeared to be at the point of death. Our Lord, by an exertion of almighty power, though at a distance, removed the fever, and restored the patient. It is added—“ *And himself believed, and his whole house.*” John iv. 53. Does it  
 not

not appear that here is an household without one infant ?—Judge ye.

Again, we read of a devout Gentile, who was liberal to his fellow-creatures, and called upon the God of Israel in solemn prayer ; of whom it is said, “ *He feared God, with all his house.*” Acts x. 2. It must either be admitted, that the term *house* does not include every individual in the family ; or, that the household of Cornelius was composed of members who were the subjects of personal religion.

Farther, there is another household mentioned by the inspired penman of the book of the Acts, of which it is declared—That Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, *with all his house.*—Hence, does it not appear, that here are three households, which were composed of persons who professed to be partakers of divine grace ?

I now proceed to take notice of those three households, of which it is said they were all baptized. The first is the house-

hold of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, and she attended to the things spoken by the Apostle ; but, whether she was a maiden, a wife, or a widow, the Holy Spirit has not condescended to inform us ;—whether her family consisted of children or servants, we are not told. It is said, that after the Apostles were released from prison, they entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed. Acts xvi. 40. Does it appear that her household was composed of infants, or of such as professed to love the Blessed Redeemer ?—Pause, consider, and determine for yourselves.

We are informed, in the same chapter, of the conversion of the jailor, and of some striking circumstances which attended that merciful event. He was brought seriously and earnestly to inquire, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?” How pleasing and important the question—Oh ! that it may be your language ! How encouraging the answer !—“And they said, Believe on the  
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the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and *to all that were in his house*: And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, *believing in God, with all his house.*" I ask, again—Does it not appear, that his family consisted of persons who were capable of attending to religious instruction? The Apostle spake the word of God to all who were in his house. I inquire further—Is it not evident that his household were believers, seeing it is said, "*He rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house?*" Acts xvi. 34.

Once more: The household of Stephanas is said to have been baptized by the Apostle of the Gentiles, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. i. ver. 16. Of whom, also, in the 16th chapter of the same book, ver. 15. it is said—"Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first



fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."—Are these things applicable to infants? I have endeavoured to speak affectionately to you, as to wise men; I now exhort you to judge what I have said; and I pray that you may be guided by the Spirit of Truth!

I proceed to the third proposition, namely—That Baptism is never properly administered, but when it is done according to the revealed will of God; and that it is never administered agreeably to divine appointment, unless the subject is immersed, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I hope to discuss this proposition with proper deference to the learning, piety, and wisdom, of those who conscientiously differ from me on this point; and shall bring forward such evidence as satisfies my own conscience before the Lord, and in the prospect of appearing at his bar.

As to the primary meaning of the word Baptism, it would be thought ostentatious

tious in me to say any thing upon that subject, seeing I can lay no claim to the advantages of a classical education : I shall, therefore, only recite what a few eminent Pædobaptists have spoken concerning the same.

Calvin, the famous Reformer, who lived in the sixteenth century, has said—" The word *baptize* signifies to immerse ; and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church."—[See Mr.Booth's *Pædobaptism exam.* Vol. I. p. 46.

Luther, who lived in the same century, says—" The term *Baptism* is a Greek word ; it may be rendered *a dipping*, as when we dip something in water that it may be entirely covered therewith."—[Mr.Booth's *Pædobap. ex.* Vol. I. p. 50.

Mr. Wilson, author of the Christian Dictionary, (a very valuable work,) in his explanation of this term therein, says—" *To baptize*, to dip into water, or to plunge one into the water."

In Dr. Scott's edition of Mr. Bailey's Dictionary, (printed in 1772,) respecting  
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the construction of this term, it is observed  
 “ *Baptism*, in strictness of speech, is that  
 kind of ablution, or washing, which con-  
 sists in *dipping* ; and when applied to the  
 Christian Institution so called, it was  
 used by the primitive christians in no other  
 sense than that of dipping, as the learned  
 Grotius and Casaubon well observe.”

Are we to conclude that these authorities  
 which I have recited are vague or indeter-  
 minate—that the persons were incompetent  
 to judge—that they were unfaithful to the  
 cause which they espoused?—or, that they  
 spoke the real truth, agreeably to the dic-  
 tates of their own consciences?—I sub-  
 mit this to your consideration.

Favour me with your serious attention  
 a few minutes longer, while I turn to some  
 passages in the sacred oracles, in which  
 Baptism is mentioned:

The Baptism of the great Head of the  
 Church first deserves our attention : The  
 venerable Baptist, we are expressly told,  
 (Mark i. 5. 9.) *baptized* IN THE RIVER  
*Jordan*. “ And Jesus, when he was bap-  
 tized,

tized, went up straightway out of the water." Matt. iii. 16. Does not this imply, that our Lord first went down into the water—that he was baptized while in the river—and that, after his Baptism, he ascended out of the water? It strikes my mind very forcibly, that these things are implied: but—Judge ye.

Another passage in the sacred volume, which demands our serious regard upon the present occasion, is recorded by John, in the third chapter of his Gospel, verse 23. —“ And John, also, was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, *because there was much water there*: and they came, and were baptized.” I ask, if John did not baptize persons by immersion, is it not very extraordinary that such a reason as this should be assigned, for administering the ordinance in Enon—BECAUSE THERE WAS MUCH WATER THERE? The venerable Calvin, in his comment on this text, observes—“ From these words, it may be inferred, that Baptism was administered by John, by *plunging the whole body under water*.” Booth's *Pædob.Ex.* vol. I. 194. Mr.



Mr. Poole's Continuator also observe—  
 “ It is from this (John iii. 23.) apparent,  
 that John baptized by *dipping the body in*  
*water* : else he need not have sought places  
 where had been a great plenty of water.”

There is one account more in the word  
 of truth, relative to the administration of  
 this ordinance, which we will just notice.  
 We have, in the preceding part of our  
 discourse, given some account of the  
 Ethiopian Eunuch, who, having profess-  
 ed his faith in the Son of God, was con-  
 sidered as a proper subject of Baptism :—  
 We continue the narrative :—“ And he  
 commanded the chariot to stand still ; and  
 they went down BOTH into the water, both  
 Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized  
 him : And when they were come up out  
 of the water, the Spirit of the Lord  
 caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw  
 him no more ; and he went on his way  
 rejoicing.” The objections which have  
 been made by some learned persons, as to  
 the natural import of the words of the  
 inspired writer, namely, that the Greek  
 pre-

prepositions, rendered in our translation *down into* the water and *up out of* the water, sometimes signify *down* UNTO, and *up* FROM, are trivial indeed : especially, when we consider that the sacred scriptures were written not to perplex but to instruct the children of men—yea, to inform the plain humble followers of the Lamb of God ; many of whom never saw a Greek Lexicon, and have no knowledge of the meaning of words in any other language than their own.—Besides, many learned Pædobaptists appear perfectly satisfied with our translation, and have made concessions greatly in favour of the practice of immersion. Calvin, whom I have before mentioned, in his observations on this passage, writes as follows : “ Here we perceive how Baptism was administered among the ancients ; for they immersed the whole body in water.”—*Booth's Pædobap. Ex.* Vol. I. 194

In Mr. Burkitt's Exposition of the 38th verse of this chapter (Acts viii.) he remarks —“ Observe the manner of the administration of Baptism to the Eunuch : he *went down*

*down into* the water, and was baptized by Philip : In those hot countries, it was usual so to do ; and we do not oppose the lawfulness of dipping in some cases, but the necessity of dipping in all cases ”

Dr. Doddridge has said—“ It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they (Philip and the Eunuch) went down to the water, merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch : a person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey, through so desert a country ; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them.”—[*Fam. Exposit.* on Acts viii. 38.]

If additional evidence was requisite to prove that immersion is the scriptural mode of administering the ordinance of Baptism, I would call your serious attention to those parts of the sacred oracles where the word is metaphorically used, and also where there is an allusion to this ordinance.

The sufferings of the incarnate Son of God—all those deep and dolorous distresses which

which he experienced, when, as the surety of his chosen people, he *bore their sins* and *carried their sorrows*—when the waves and the billows of divine wrath overwhelmed his holy Soul—these are termed *a baptism*.

In the awful prospect of that important hour, he said to his disciples—“ I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !” Luke xii. 50. Great afflictions, in the word of truth, are frequently represented under the idea of deep waters and overwhelming floods.—“ Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.” Song of Solomon, viii. 7. Again :—“ Save me, O God ! for the waters are come in unto my soul :— I sink in deep mire where there is no standing : I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.” Pf. lxix. 1—4. These strong and striking figures are used by the inspired Psalmist, to represent the sufferings of the Blessed Jesus : this appears from what follows—“ They that hate me with-  
out



out a cause are more than the hairs of mine head :—Then I restored that which I took not away.” (See also John xv, 25.) Which is most expressive upon this subject, an infant being sprinkled, or a person being solemnly immersed in water ?—Judge ye.

Dr. Doddridge, in his paraphrase on the 12th chapter of Luke, refers to the above passage ; his words are—“ I have, indeed, a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall be shortly bathed as it were in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress.”

Mr. Poole’s Continuators, in the annotations on Matt. xx, 22. insert as follows —“ To be baptized is to be dipped in water ; metaphorically, to be plunged in afflictions. ‘ I am (saith Christ,) to be baptized with blood ; overwhelmed with sufferings and afflictions.’”

Corresponding with these ideas is the language of the Apostle, when he alludes to Baptism, and mentions it as a motive to holy conversation :—“ Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death ;  
that

that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The words of the late Mr. George Whitefield upon this passage are remarkable, and much in favour of our practice : — " It is certain that in the words of our text (Rom. vi. 3, 4.) there is an allusion to the manner of baptism, which was by immersion ; which our own church allows, and insists upon it that children shall be immersed in water, unless those that bring the children to be baptized assure the minister that they cannot bear the plunging" — *Eighteen Sermons*, p. 297.

The propriety of this concession, with reference to the Church of England, will appear to every one who consults the Common Prayer Book ; where it is expressly enjoined — " That the priest shall take the child into his hands, and shall say to the godfathers and godmothers, Name this child : then naming it after them, (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it), he shall dip it in the water  
dis-

discreetly and warily, saying, &c.”—[*Public Baptism of Infants.*]

Hence it appears, that in the Established Church, pouring was only admissible under certain circumstances; and as for sprinkling, I believe there is not a word said concerning it in the whole service.

Thus, my dear friends, I have spoken to you on the present occasion: I have appealed to the sacred oracles; and have introduced several short quotations from the writings of many wise, learned, and godly men, who were Pædobaptists, in order to shew that the remarks which I have made are not forced, but natural, reasonable, and scriptural: I have endeavoured to speak with seriousness and affection: I will once more add, in the words of the text—Judge ye what I say.

To conclude: Permit me, my dear hearers, to caution each of you against resting satisfied with a mere form of godliness. Persons may assent to all the precious doctrines of grace, and embrace the ordinances which Christ has appointed;—  
but

but what will that avail, if they are not born of the Spirit of God ? If they are habitually under the dominion of pride and covetousness ; if they are destitute of an experimental knowledge of Christ—of genuine faith in his atonement and righteousness—of sincere unfeigned love to his person and government—and of a real desire to glorify his precious name ; if, after all their profession, they die in such a state, they will be lost for ever.

To you who know the joyful sound,—who rejoice in the Redeemer's name, and have followed the Lamb in the way which he has appointed ; I would say—Hold fast the truth in love. Instead of exhorting you to be shy of your christian brethren who may conscientiously differ from you, I would say—Endeavour to convince them that, while you revere the authority of Jesus, you have tasted his dying love, and live under its constraining power. Unite, as far as possible, with all those that love the adorable Immanuel, in opposing sin and error, and in endeavouring instrumentally



mentally to bring others to believe in his precious name. Avoid a contentious spirit ; and practically confute the ungenerous reflection that has been cast upon us, as though our zeal was principally exerted to make profelytes to an opinion, instead of aiming (through a divine blessing on our efforts) to convert poor sinners to Jesus Christ.

Those who practically differ from me, I would affectionately exhort diligently to search the sacred word of God, and constantly to implore the guidance of that infallible teacher—the Spirit of Truth, which our exalted Saviour has promised to his people. And I earnestly pray, that vital, experimental, and practical godliness, may, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, abundantly flourish among real christians of every denomination ! Amen.



THE END.